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The actual living standard although probably lower than 511
in any peace-time year before World War II, is not so low as to cause general unrest. The Hungarian economy, however, rests on a precarious foundation and a poor crop year can bring the living standard down considerably below normal. This was the case in 1953 when the Berlin rioting and the unrest resulting from a widespread drop in agricultural and industrial production forced the Communists to introduce the "New Course" and to shift the economic stress from heavy industry to consumer goods.

Delinquency, begging and vagabondage are practically non- 735 738
existent in Hungary, or at least they are not noticeable because the police are carefully rounding up those who seem to have nothing to do and putting them to work on various public projects. No reliable figures on criminality are available. Judging from the court columns 687
appearing in the daily newspapers, however, one gets the impression that "crimes against socialist property" are quite frequent--the pilfering of materials or, more seldom, tools, from the workshops, and fraud in the administration of socialized industrial or agricultural concerns. Articles thundering against the workers' tardiness or failure to deliver grain are another commonplace in the newspapers. [461]

The poverty of the country prevents the development of 000

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471 454 The first decree issued by virtue of the authority given in August 1947 required enterprises to conduct their business in accordance with specific plans approved by the National Planning Department. These plans were to be set up by the leading executives for the purpose of being submitted to the Planning Department and to the competent Ministry. The obligation to prepare and submit specific plans in pursuance of the National Economic Plan was generally imposed on industrial enterprises above the level of small-scale industries—employing at least twenty workers—on all enterprises incorporated as public or private limited companies, and, without exception, on publicly-owned concerns. The classes of enterprise above mentioned were bound to keep in line with their individual production quotas and capital programmes. Consequently they had to ask for a permit from the National Planning Department before carrying out the slightest capital outlay not included in their plan as approved beforehand. For others (agriculture, commerce, small-scale industry, etc.) capital outlay up to 200,000 forint—equalling about £4,000—was allowed to be carried out without special authorization. Thus a partial investment control was established even in branches of production not directly subject to the Plan. Any responsible person infringing those enactments committed, according to the decree, an offence liable to a penalty of up to one year's imprisonment. ● 687

It was found before long that the decree published in August did not cover the whole range of activities to be controlled by the planners. It had no special bearing on agriculture. In November a new edict under the Act, superseding the extremely vague definition of offences, was issued. The definition of offences against the Plan became, according to this second decree, much more specific. They were defined thus:

(1) Any divergence from the directives given by the authorities regarding the quantity or quality of production or the combination of factors; (2) the conversion or destruction of goods (including producer goods) in violation of the standards of prudent management; (3) concealment of any stores and stocks so as to withhold them from the use required by the Plan; (4) the alienation or acquisition of goods against the rules in force; (5) the use of capital, whether owned or borrowed, for purposes not covered by the specific plan approved for the enterprise concerned; (6) the absence of a system of book-keeping enabling authorities to determine whether the enterprise is conducted according to the Plan.

In contrast with the former decree, offences against the Plan were now in principle qualified as a more serious class of crime,

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comparable to felony under English law. Even in a case of mere negligence an offender became liable to imprisonment up to three years. In all other cases the penalty may be penal servitude up to five years and, in aggravated cases, up to ten years. Even a death penalty may be inflicted when damage is done to important plant so serious as to interrupt production.

The decree clearly aims at investing the National Planning Department with an almost absolute discretion to prosecute for economic sabotage. Thus methods of terror were introduced to enforce the Plan. It is open to doubt whether in the long run these methods were conducive to economic efficiency, in particular, in regard to the quality of work done.

THE PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

In reviewing the initial difficulties of the working of the Three-year Plan, it should be pointed out that they did not constitute arguments against planning in general, since they were rooted in specific Hungarian conditions. At the outset one of the main obstacles to elaborate planning was the gap in statistics on production. Later on it necessitated modifying the Plan. This insufficient information on fundamental facts, and perhaps still more the deficiencies in organization, were connected with the hasty way in which the transition to a system of planned economy was staged. The National Planning Department opened its activities on 1 August, the very same day that the Plan was officially put in force. Before that date preparatory work had devolved on different departments lacking effective co-ordination.

None the less, as required by law, the National Planning Department published a Three-year Plan on 1 August 1947 in the *Official Gazette*. It included a yearly production programme for industry and agriculture, as well as a national capital programme comprising investment in agriculture, mining, industry, communications, and buildings. The Plan proclaimed that, supported by the creation of an enlarged technical equipment and by a 50 per cent increase in the productivity of labour, industrial output in the third Plan year should amount roughly to double that of 1946–7, while farm production was to be raised by about 60 per cent.

The programme of output was mostly based on a broad classification of commodities; only sixty-nine types of commodities were enumerated. When the time came to give directions to individual enterprises, the National Planning Department felt the need of further details and expanded its list to include

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whether and to what extent an extension of heavy industry beyond that required for covering the urgent needs of reconstruction and re-equipment should be initiated.

As shown by numerous complaints, planning failed to synchronize the manufacturing of producers' goods with investment. To secure deliveries in due time and of the quality required, the Ministry of Industry prescribed a formula for contracts, stipulating penalties for delays or other failures in deliveries. The significance of this measure faded as soon as any delay could be qualified as sabotage of the Plan under the decree issued in November 1947.

Of the application of the Plan to private enterprise, the methods employed in the rubber industry may be taken as more or less typical. Preparatory work was done by the competent section of the Ministry of Industry in collaboration with a few selected executives and the workers' representatives of the enterprises concerned. Estimates of production were mostly drawn up for classes of commodities, not for specified articles. The representatives of private enterprise were unwilling to give estimates in detail or to commit themselves accordingly, for they hoped to retain freedom to change from one product to another whenever difficulties of production or of sale called for a switch-over. They also endeavoured to keep estimates of output as low as possible so as to forestall troubles which might arise if they failed to reach the quota. By this method of budgeting the road was cleared for surpassing the production programme set up by the Plan.

Thus the production schedule for light industry did not present a cut and dried programme by which the executives of the enterprises could be guided and which they were bound to observe. This vagueness, which was to a certain extent deliberate, secured a considerable degree of flexibility, a quality not altogether disadvantageous for a general economic plan.

Within the group of consumer-goods industries, textiles held a special position in the application of the Plan. The different sections of this industry had for many years been united in an association with a carefully developed statistical service on technical equipment, labour, raw-material requirements, and production. During the war raw-material allocations were administered through this association, which possessed a ready scheme for distribution according to capacities. The industry had, in fact, been under a system of sectional planning. The authorities naturally made use of this instrument. With its aid a plan for the textile industries was drawn up centrally. This plan, more elaborate than in other branches of light industry, presented in its subdivisions as production programme for each of the factories.

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very practical significance, in that once approved they became obligatory. Any departure from them, whether in production or in capital outlay, exposed the executives to the danger of being accused of sabotage.

No modified version of the Plan, compiled from the individual quotas submitted, was published. Two series of figures were disclosed: the preliminary forecast, and the achievements in the first Plan year. In the following table actual production is not compared with totals built up from the quotas of the individual enterprises, but with the preliminary programme promulgated on 1 August 1947.

	Preliminary Forecast	*Actual 1947–8*	*Percentage fulfilment*
Iron ore, 1,000 tons	210	258	123
Bauxite, 1,000 tons	220	400	182
Electrical engineering, value million forint	335	562	168
Bricks, million pieces	250	205	82
Leather, million forint	232	364	156
Footwear	—	—	123
Knitted wear, 1,000 kg.	3,480	1,750	50
Flour	—	—	62
Rubber goods, value million forint	80	230	288

As illustrated by the wide range of variation in the rates of fulfilment, the Plan was fluid. The forecast published in August 1947 was but a starting point. Numerous factors inducing considerable alterations were at work. When the Plan was put into operation and production in accordance with the quotas was entered upon, substantial departures from the forecast took place, and in many cases the quotas were exceeded. The increase in the output of iron ore was due to a quicker rise in labour productivity than had been expected. Ample ore supplies were reflected in the output of rolled material, entailing a revision of the programme for heavy machine industry. In the case of bauxite the possibilities of sale were, as stated officially, under-estimated. Even the steep increase in output remained within the available capacity. The level of production in electrical engineering was revised in order to raise exports. The markedly higher achievement was obtained by the introduction of a second shift, in some instances even of a third. In contrast to these extensions, brick production was less than planned. The building-material industry was to a considerable extent disorganized. Prior to the Plan its coal supplies were deficient. Deliveries of fuel became more regular under the Plan, but productivity of labour continued to be extremely low.

Developments in consumer-goods industries were highly uneven. The huge excess in rubber-goods output over the quantity planned can be explained mainly by the under-estimation of

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resided in every administrative district—about 200 by the end of the first Plan year.

The change in the position of the farmers can be fully appreciated only when the political atmosphere in the rural districts is realized. The edict of November 1947, in protection of the Three-year Plan against criminal offences, could naturally be applied equally to agriculture. In case of delay in some part of his work, or of any infringement of delivery orders, the farmer might be threatened with prosecution for economic sabotage. This possibility often became a reality as soon as the campaign which aimed at splitting the peasant population had been started. The November edict then proved to be a very effective weapon in fighting the *kulaks*, i.e. the wealthy peasants with a property exceeding 25 yokes. Holdings over that size were supposed to need hired labour, qualifying the owner as a class enemy. The farmers with a smaller property than 25 yokes were acknowledged as allies of the working class, not exploiting labour but themselves running their farms assisted only by members of their families.

THE UN-PLANNED SECTION

Small-scale Industries

The control exercised by the Planning Department did not extend to unincorporated concerns employing fewer than twenty workers. The share of the small units below this limit in the total output of manufactured goods was near 25 per cent. These units were not obliged to submit production plans. Investments carried out by them required approval only when exceeding the amount of 200,000 forint (£4,000). Consequently an appreciable part of industrial production and some part of total investment (in small-scale industry, agriculture, and trade) remained 'un-planned'.

Of raw-material supplies it was decided that certain quotas should be allotted to small-scale industry. These quotas were as a rule not adequate, allowing only a limited scope for the activities of handicrafts. Small manufacturers and handicraftsmen practically carried on their business under a controlled but not a planned economy. Yet controls were not efficient enough to regulate the activities closely. This applied in the first place to the prices they charged. The profits they earned, therefore, were often far above the officially approved rates. Consequently they were able to pay wages and raw-material prices in excess of the prescribed limits. Such evasions of the price control on raw materials were not extensive. The black market, though

471 For a while there were signs of rivalry between the Planning Office and the Supreme Economic Council, also a Communist-controlled body, which ended in the victory of the council. However, in 1949 the council was abolished, its staff was detailed to various ministries and government agencies, while its policy-making functions were transferred to a newly-created People's Economic Council, representing the major parties of the National Front of Independence under the chairmanship of a very powerful Communist Minister of State. The council counts several cabinet ministers among its members but is not a sub-committee of the Council of Ministers. It decides economic policy at the highest level and is the highest authority in matters of planning.

•[687] When the plan was embodied in law, the government was authorized to issue all decrees necessary for the execution of the plan. Contravention of these decrees and, in general, obstruction to executing the plan were made a crime liable to severe punishment, even death in the case of serious sabotage. The punitive measures were later reinforced. Besides the statutory instruments of control, the government had other means to enforce the plan. Through successive nationalizations, the government became by far the most important single employer and its powers of black-listing were enormous. Besides, a general system of licenses restricted to a minimum free economic activity of any sort. Extension of this permit system to the purchase and lease of agricultural land made the system watertight.

[467] The party-dominated trade-unions and works councils were also important instruments of control. They were active in enforcing discipline, increasing output, and reducing costs, in marked contrast to their role in prenationalization and pre-plan days. Their control of the labor exchanges gave them complete power over workers of all grades as nobody could accept a work contract without the endorsement of the trade-unions.

471 461 An effective instrument to increase individual and collective output was the sharply graded piece-rate system with its constantly raised standards of output. Competitions were organized between different establishments and between departments of the same establishment with prizes and privileges awarded to the winners. The foundations were laid for the Hungarian Stakhanovite movement. Considerable material and social privileges were granted to the winning shock-workers who were then obliged to instruct their fellow workers in an effort to speed up production. The record output, achieved under special

Soon after the warning of the Chairman of the People's Economic Council, a new wage system was introduced which reduced earnings unless output was stepped up considerably. The wage-reducing effect of the new piece-rates was first denied but later openly admitted. It led to widespread resentment expressed in wage frauds, the slackening of work competition and acts of sabotage which prompted the government to resort to strong measures. A new decree was issued to protect social property, threatening the death penalty to those responsible for serious damage. Together with the revision of wage rates, the terms of the work competition were made stricter and control was tightened. Identification cards were introduced showing a record of employment, and unauthorized changes of jobs brought punishment. "Social tribunals," consisting of workers and party representatives, were set up to deal with slackness, lack of discipline, and minor frauds while ordinary courts began passing sentences of several years imprisonment for relatively minor wage frauds. The reform of the criminal law made a socially dangerous attitude a crime liable to punishment, and introduced forced labor as a method of punishment.

All this fits very unconvincingly into the picture of greatly improved standards of living. One is led to suspect that the true rate of improvement must have been very much below that claimed, if attempts to slow down the rate and lower the level could have evoked such widespread and serious resentment as indicated by the severe retaliatory measures.

Nevertheless, there was no slackening in the execution of the investment program. Recent announcements speak of even speeding up investments scheduled for 1950 by 0.9 billion forints, that is, by about 10 percent. But 38 percent of the additional investments were to be spent on housing, cultural and welfare schemes, 43 percent on railway and road construction, the rest on agriculture.

THE OIL INDUSTRY IN THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMY

Operations in the oil fields had been little disturbed by the war, and in the immediate postwar period production was maintained at a relatively high level. The 1945 crude production of 656,000 tons (4,990,000 barrels) and the 1946 output of 675,000 tons (5,130,000 barrels) was exceeded only during the peak war years, and represented one of the few bright spots in the otherwise rather bleak economic picture. However, neither the owners of MAORT nor the Hungarian economy benefited very much from this production. In 1945-1946, the bulk of the crude went to the Red Army without payment, while in the following years, 1946-1948, much went to the Soviet Union and neighboring satellites as forced exports or as reparations. During this period the crude had to be delivered to the government at arbitrarily fixed prices.

In the spring of 1948, paralleling the second wave of nationalization, the directors of MAORT were tried for sabotage of the Three-Year Plan, and soon after the company was confiscated. Subsequently, MAORT was subdivided into several "National Enterprises." Crude production fell to 569,000 tons (4,324,000 barrels) in 1947 and fluctuated between 475,000 and 500,000 tons (3,610,000 and 3,800,000 barrels) during the following three years. As noted above, the targets set in the Three-Year Plan were not reached, and by 1949 the persistent crisis in the oil industry became one of the planners' major problems.

The old Zala fields were nearing depletion and could no longer continue the forced production records of wartime, while the expected new discoveries did not materialize. An acute shortage of drilling equipment, lack of skilled labor, and successive purges of management materially contributed to this failure.

In eastern Hungary, the German-held MANAT concession was handed over to Soviet ownership. A Soviet-Hungarian Oil Company, Maszovol, was organized in 1946. Extensive oil explorations were carried out but no commercial oil discoveries were made until the end of 1949.

Hungary's refineries, unlike her oil fields, were very severely damaged during the war. Refining capacity,

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

315 sistent rumors of the presence of Romanian oil experts both at the oil fields at Lispe and at Nagykanizsa; a recent eyewitness account describes the arrest of six Romanian oil experts at Lispe in December 1952 and the closing of the "Romanian Office" at Nagykanizsa in January 1953.

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● 687 The internal security measures taken at the different nationalized units of the oil industry became increasingly severe. Confidential reports invariably refer to the heavy secret police supervision of personnel; to armed guards at the wells and along the pipelines; and to arrests, demotions, and deportations for mechanical and other failures.

The proximity of Yugoslavia and Austria to the Transdanubian oil area creates further problems for the communist authorities, necessitating the employment of additional heavy military guards, the screening of all workers for reliability, and an elaborate pass system. There have been border incidents; and the fact that a large part of their oil has to be extracted under the guns of Tito's militia seems to make the Budapest government particularly unhappy.[24]

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315 Some recent and as yet unconfirmed reports state that the Hungarian government entered into a barter agreement with Soviet authorities according to which the formerly MAORT concession (the areas west of the Danube) and the National Transdanubian Oil Company (also formerly MAORT) were merged into Maszovol. As its part of the bargain the Soviet Union returned sixty-nine former German enterprises to the Hungarian government. This "generous" act of the Soviet Union was reported by Budapest newspapers as having taken place on 30 September 1952, but no mention was made of the oil deal.

If this information proves to be true, the entire Hungarian oil industry is now directly controlled in theory as well as in practice by a Soviet oil combinat in Moscow.

315 A discovery reported at Surd, south of Nagykanizsa, on the Inke structure, has been referred to above. There

24 [Cf. cat. 116, p. 73 for source -- Analyst]

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would receive the attention they deserved. The department has since brought the Catholic clergy into the National Insurance scheme and has also facilitated the creation of church co-operative stores for the sale of church literature, vestments and furnishings.

The next development was an unhappy one. The Archbishop of Kalocsa, Jozsef Grösz, who had succeeded Mindszenty in the leadership of the Catholic Church in Hungary, and eight others, were brought to trial, found guilty and sentenced, for continuing the Mindszenty conspiracy. Once again the evidence was overwhelming and the contention of those who had held that Mindszenty and his accomplices had only confessed what they knew the prosecution knew, was abundantly proved when it transpired that Grösz had been entrusted by Mindszenty with the task of continuing his subversive work in the event of his being arrested.

This trial of a second leader of the Catholic Church was obviously a profound shock to the Bench of Bishops and in July, under the presidency of Dr. Czapik, the Archbishop of Eger, they issued unanimously the following statement:

> The Hungarian Bench of Bishops—following the principles of the Catholic faith, and obeying the commands of God, according to which we should be dutiful citizens and respect the laws of the country in which we live, as they do not oblige us to deny the laws of God—make the following statement:—

The Bench of Catholic Bishops ratifies the

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the people, consolidate social assets, increase the economic strength of the Hungarian People's Republic, raise the living standard and cultural level of the workers and strengthen the people's democratic system. 642* 641

Article 60.

Military service is the honorable duty of the citizens of the Hungarian People's Republic in accordance with the law on universal military service. [702]

Article 61.

1) Defence of the home country is the sacred duty of all citizens of the Hungarian People's Republic. 642*

2) Treason, violation of the military oath, desertion to the enemy, espionage and every action detrimental to the military strength of the country, — constituting a betrayal of the cause of the country and of the workers, — is subject to the severest penalties of the law. 687

SECTION NINE

The Electoral System.

Article 62.

1) Members of Parliament are elected by the citizens of the Hungarian People's Republic on the basis of universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot. 642* 666

2) The elected members are accountable to their constituents.

3) The constituents have the right to recall their elected member of Parliament.

Article 63.

1) All citizens of the Hungarian People's Republic who are of age have the right to vote.

2) Enemies of the working people and those who are unsound of mind are excluded from the suffrage by law.

Article 64.

At elections every citizen entitled to vote has one vote and all votes are equal.

Article 65.

All citizens who have the vote are eligible for election.

Article 66.

Details of the election and recall of members of Parliament are laid down in a special Act of Parliament.

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642 niably contains all the elements inherent in a constitutional, republican, representative democracy. In the words of one writer, they "sound like the Bill of Rights and the Four Freedoms rolled into one,"[6] and include personal freedom, right to a life free from oppression, freedom from fear or want, free expression of thought and opinion, free exercise of religion, freedom of assembly and association, right to personal property, to personal security, to work, to a livelihood, to free education, and the right to participate in the life of the state and in local government.[7]

There are no *constitutional* impediments in Hungary to the "free and unfettered" practice of political democracy, although factual developments have seldom corresponded to legal documents. Governmental powers are satisfactorily outlined in the text of the laws and carefully separated from each other; the National Assembly possesses all legislative power, while executive authority rests with a cabinet of ministers responsible to the Assembly. The President, as head of the Republic, is elected for a four-year term and cannot be reelected successively. The President's official functions are carefully limited by law and include such powers as the appointment of a Prime Minister, confirmation of Cabinet members, and the appointment of diplomatic envoys. The President has the right of vetoing legislation passed by the Assembly, but if the same law is passed again, he is obliged to sign it. He can be impeached by the Assembly for violations of the law or of the constitution.

641 These broad constitutional outlines were subsequently limited by restrictive legislation. A governmental decree, published in June, 1946, provided that the right of supervising political associations shall be exercised by the Minister of the Interior.[8] Simultaneously a law on *The Defense of Hungarian Democracy* defined as criminal any incitement against the republican form of government, against a race or religion, against the equality of all citizens, and in general, any infringement of 687 specific civil liberties. This defense law has since served as the constitu- 727 tional basis for war criminal trials in Hungary. Its provisions were invoked in setting up the juridical procedure for the People's Courts and

6 George A. Lanyi, "Hungary Aims at Liberty For All in Republic," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 5, 1946, pp. 1 and 6.

7 Cf. Public Law No. I, officially published on May 27, 1946, under the title of *Act on the Protection of Human Rights*; official translation by *Hungarian Legal News Service*, Budapest, Aug. 1, 1946.

8 Decree 7300/1946 M.E., published June 28, 1946, H.G. 144.

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the People's public prosecution of all war-crimes against the Hungarian nation.

Actually trials of war-criminals were started soon after Hungary's liberation was completed. Only the trials of certain major offenders bear any relevance to strictly constitutional or political issues. The trial of Béla Imrédy, former Premier heading the impressive list of "criminals against the Nation," focussed world-wide attention on the dual problems of individual war-guilt, and legal responsibility for aiding and participating in Fascist aggression. In an emotionally eloquent indictment speech, Zoltàn Horvàth, a Social Democratic political solicitor, clearly stated that the former Premier and acknowledged leader of various factions within the notorious "Arrow Cross" movement would have to face personal responsibility for many of Hungary's disasters. "From anti-Jewish legislation to the concentration camp of Auschwitz, from the Anti-Comintern to the ruined bridges of Budapest, from economic surrender to the complete plunder and eventual ruination of the country, there is a single straight line connecting the two terminal dates, 1938 and 1945. Imrédy was the prime instigator, self-appointed apostle and legislator, the most insistent advocate of all these political moves."[9]

For over a year the People's Courts were kept busy sentencing individual political leaders who played prominent roles in Hungary's most reactionary period. Former Cabinet members, public servants, diplomatic representatives and newspapermen were purged in a continuous flow of swift and efficient trials. While public opinion generally accepted the constitutional and political necessity of liquidating such prime war-criminals as Imrédy and Foreign Minister Làszló Bàrdossy, lately a quiet resentment, a mute opposition has developed against the interminable series of war-trials. Critics of the present coalition government contend that the purge of war-criminals was originally conceived of and carried out in the spirit of a sincere and desirable political movement, but it has gradually degenerated into a sinister judicial farce where "the cry for

9 Cf. S. Szalai–Z. Horváth, *A Szociáldemokrata Párt Vádat Emel*, (Budapest, 1946) p. 38. Other war-criminal trials followed in the footsteps of the Imrédy case. Most fascist leaders of pre-war Hungary were sentenced to death by unanimous verdicts of the courts. Only recently was the death-sentence of András Tasnádi-Nagy revised by the court of appeal and changed to a life-sentence. Tasnádi-Nagy was the president of the Lower House of Parliament, a former Minister of Justice who served in various cabinets between 1939 and 1945, particularly in the Sztójay Cabinet of 1944. He was also President of the Parliament under the Hungarian National Socialists whom he eventually followed to western Hungary and to Austria in their last-minute flight. Cf. "The Continuation of War Criminal Trials in Hungary," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Jan. 2, 1947, p. 2.

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fresh victims seems inexhaustible. The purge of the public services was scarcely completed when the demand was raised for new large-scale dismissals."[10] Recent guilt-trials have increasingly reflected the eminently vindictive, purely partisan motivation of Hungary's new ruler, the Communist Party, whose leaders have never hesitated to bare their extreme ideological bias, turning it offensively and indiscriminately against the champions of alleged political or economic reaction.

Political Parties and Domestic Politics

The composition of the first post-war coalition government corresponded roughly to the results of the country's post-liberation election. The number of votes cast reached almost five million; of these the Smallholders Party polled well over two and a half million while the combined votes cast for the Communist and Social Democratic Parties barely exceeded one and a half million. Obviously, the elections of November 1945 inflicted an undisguised and significant defeat upon the two extreme leftist parties, particularly on the Communists, while temporarily assuring the middle-of-the-road Smallholders Party of a decisive governmental majority. The Smallholders' victory was most overwhelming in Budapest where the ratio of Communist votes was even lower than in the rest of the country. The new coalition government was built around nine members of the Smallholders Party and four members each of the Social Democratic and Communist Parties.

Several unexpected political developments were in startling contrast with this first chapter of democratic renaissance. The constitutional significance of national elections was considerably deflated by the pre-election agreement of the three major political parties to continue their coalition *regardless of the results of these popular elections.* This partisan maneuver gave the Communists an opportunity to exercise undue power, also displayed a strange "ballot-proof" version, a disappointingly autocratic appraisal of the role of national elections in parliamentary forms of government. According to its official interpretation, the agreement "was absolutely necessary to maintain national unity. There were such serious problems to be solved that none of the parties could attempt to undertake the task alone. For this reason . . . the major parties of the Hungarian Independence Front have agreed to maintain the

10 Cf. J. O., "Hungary Between East and West," *The World Today*, May, 1946, p. 214.

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editor, Béla Zsolt. From all indications, Zsolt's articles carry a great deal of weight in influencing the public opinion of Budapest. The Smallholders' weekly publication, *Reggel*, manages to supply a detailed and interesting coverage of domestic developments, both economic and political. Such measures of internal reconstruction as the application of a nation-wide martial law and death penalties to black marketeers and smugglers are conscientiously discussed and appraised in *Reggel*.[31]

Few foreign language publications have penetrated the intellectual "iron curtain" around Hungary; Western political and literary materials cannot be disseminated. Soviet authorities officially protested in the fall of 1946 against the publication and distribution of the U. S. State Department Bulletin containing primarily official documents. The American Legation in Budapest, backed up by the State Department, has nevertheless continued to distribute the Bulletin on a mailing list basis. About 500 English language and 500 Hungarian copies are regularly sent to newspapers, and to a few carefully selected government officials.

Propaganda matters are handled by the Ministry of Public Information whose official objectives involve the "information and *influencing* of Hungarian public opinion." Democracy has to be accepted, states an official bulletin of Public Information, even by those who were misled by the destructive propaganda of the past few years and have thus far proved incapable of adapting themselves to Hungary's present-day democracy.[32] These broad and aggressive objectives were gradually implemented by such officials as the present Minister of Information, József Bognár, theoretically a Smallholder, in reality of the extreme Left. According to recent newspaper reports, his Ministry has organized hundreds of political and cultural indoctrination courses, given both in Budapest and in provincial communities under the personal supervision of Bognár. The courses deal with "timely political and social questions, including such problems as participation of the peasant class in a democracy and the successful methods of national planning."[33] Propaganda and press are closely interwoven in present

31 This drastic executive order was put into effect in December, 1946. Judges are in permanent sessions to deal with such cases without delay. In addition to Budapest tribunals, twenty-two provincial courts are handling "crimes" connected with black-market operations. Penalties range for a minimum of ten years' imprisonment to death sentences. Cf. *Reggel*, Dec. 2, 1946, p. 5.

32 Quoted in *Világ*, Nov. 23, 1946, p. 2.

33 Cf. *Magyar Nemzet*, Nov. 22, 1946, p. 3. The report indicates that there are over one hundred students in each course, the period of instruction covering about two weeks.

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G53 794 libraries, art treasures, and furnishings belonging to the Churches were nationalized by a decree of November 16, 1948, so that none of these could be sold. The Constitution of the People's Democracy, which had been ratified on August 20, proclaimed the separation of Church and State. This meant not only that all the ancient privileges of the Catholic Church were abrogated (for example, the Archbishop of Esztergom had been a member of the Regent's Council), but that in all truth two hostile powers had been established in Hungary: atheistic Communism, able to rely on the full might of the civil authority; and organized religion, able to exist only if it were subsidized by the State and if it remained content not to resist any propagandistic attack to which it was subjected. The sole unanswered question was whether under such conditions the Churches could survive and maintain their integrity. The prostitution of the intellectual had been woeful enough, as everyone knows who has studied the history of professors and clergymen cowed by Hitler. Would spokesmen for Christ now become the docile puppets of a ruthless and irreligious regime?

793 687 In a setting thus compounded of frustration and terror there emerged Joseph, Cardinal Mindszenty, and the drama of his opposition and torment, surely the most moving and widely known episode in the Catholic resistance to Communism. It has, however, perhaps not always been understood. When his name first drew notice outside his own country it was besmirched with the propaganda which laid low so much of the world, in that hour grim in its repudiation of Nazism and unwilling to face the dire possibility that Stalinism might conceivably prove to be still more mighty and no less evil. The Cardinal was widely reputed to be a reactionary busybody, a zealous friend and supporter of the Magyars (all of them of course disreputable), a devotee of Hitler, an arch-clerical

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schemer, and above all an anti-Semite. When Béla Fabian published his warmly human biography of the Cardinal in 1949, commemorating the friendship between the Jews of Hungary and the Prince of the Church, one could almost feel the surprise which was enkindled in many minds. Therewith the Communist Party slowly began to lose one of its most vigorously fought propaganda battles. It had every means at its disposal, including an official account of the trial of the Cardinal and his confession, which was translated into many languages. In the end, however, the testimony which the Party itself had provided about the methods of justice employed by its minions was subjected to careful examination in all free countries, and the results of that scrutiny were so conclusive that ever since no one who is not committed body and soul to the Party has believed any accusation levied by a Communist regime against its opponents.

The literature on the Cardinal is extensive, and much of it is very good. It presents a churchman who, despite a measure of physical frailty, had an extraordinarily dynamic and sanguine temperament. He could be relied upon to speak his mind, but the edge was taken off his candor by a sense of humor and a deep and readily communicated interest in the welfare of other human beings. The Cardinal was perhaps not of the intellectual stature of his great predecessor, Cardinal Serédi; but he had literary talent, considerable learning, and energy of mind. His name as we now know it was conferred upon him when he became Bishop of Hungary's most distinguished See and therewith, under the laws of the Regency, a nobleman. Born Joseph Pehm on March 29, 1892, he was of peasant stock, anchored for generations in the soil of western Hungary. He knew the simple people of the villages, their virtues and their weaknesses; and this insight stood him in good stead throughout his trying and absorbing career as a

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659 sociation of Teachers, called the parents of his congregation
793 together to vote on whether the schools should be removed
661 from the jurisdiction of the Church. Two pads of paper were placed on the table, one for affirmative and the other for negative votes. All four hundred parents voted No. Two days later, the village council met to consider the same question. Rumors coursed through the town to the effect that the vote cast by the parents was to be nullified, and quickly an excited crowd gathered round the town hall, demanding that the will of the people be respected. The police were sent for, and they ordered the crowd to disperse. One officer drew his revolver and threatened to shoot. Thereupon a citizen named Kiralyfalvi entered the fray; there was a scuffle, and the policeman lay dead.

793 The pastor, Father Aszalos, seems not to have been present
• 687 when the shooting occurred. Nevertheless he became the central figure in a highly theatrical trial designed to prove that he and the "reactionary Hierarchy" were responsible for the incident. First the poor priest was taken, together with Kiralyfalvi and other villagers to the notorious prison maintained by the secret police at Andrássy ut 60, Budapest. The trial was then conducted without benefit of defense counsel. To the great surprise of nearly everyone—including, it is said, the officials of the Ministry of the Interior—Father Aszalos pleaded guilty. Indeed he went on to say that the real culprits were his religious superiors, who were always stirring up opposition to the government. Left to himself, he added, he would never have argued against the secularization of education. Nevertheless he was guilty because he had failed to heed his own conscience. The sentence of death imposed by the court was changed later to life imprisonment.

659 The observance of the Holy Year continued, despite stead-
796 ily mounting obstacles, into the summer of 1948. It had be-

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On the day after Christmas, 1948, a van of police cars moved from Andrássy ut 60 to Esztergom to arrest the Cardinal. The sixteen officers armed with light automatic rifles carried out the mission assigned to them. The Cardinal took leave of his aged mother, having scribbled on the back of an envelope the now famous words: "I have taken no part in any conspiracy of any kind. I shall not resign from my episcopal See. I shall not make a confession. But if despite what I now say you should read that I have confessed or resigned, and even see it authenticated by my signature, bear in mind that it will have been only the result of human frailty. In advance, I declare all such actions null and void." On the following day it was announced to the world that the Cardinal was in prison.

Stephen K. Swift has made a careful study of available reports concerning the treatment meted out to the Cardinal while he was in the hands of his jailers, and this can be followed in detail in his memorable book, *The Cardinal's Story*. Because certain of the officers who witnessed the events managed to escape from Hungary and relate what they had observed of interrogation methods learned in Moscow, there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the reports. These also corroborate what has been learned of Russian methods through victims who have escaped from other parts of the Russian-controlled world. It is therefore no matter for wonder that the Cardinal signed a confession. Indeed, as we shall see, he could proudly have attested to many things of which he stood accused. But the captors managed to break his spirit and make him say that he regretted what he had done. This ominous success gained by the interrogators, even if we had no other reason for opposing the Communist system with all the strength and ingenuity we can muster, would suffice to rouse the conscience of the world as it once did against Nazism: the successful employment of science to crush the soul of a human being and make him gain-

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say everything that has been dearest to the core of his heart during all his life. 793 687

The Cardinal was tried in the company of men deemed to have been his accomplices in a great conspiracy against the government. All pleaded guilty. Witnesses to the trial beheld a spectacle oddly reminiscent of the Reichstag Fire trials in Berlin during 1933, with the sinister difference that then even Göring could not intimidate the Court. Béla Fabian has pointed [693] out the curious fact that those who conducted the trial of the Cardinal were former Nazis. The President, Dr. Vilmos Olti, had served the Hungarian Hitlerites even as he now served the Communists; and the leader of the prison interrogators, Dr. Martin Bodonyi, had worked for Nazi military tribunals under another name. The defense counsel assigned to the case had, however, been a member of the Communist Party since the days of Béla Kun. 793 687 695

Questions and answers succeeded each other much as they must have in the fearful prison. On the morning of February 8, 1949, the verdict was read:

"Joseph Mindszenty, the first accused, is sentenced herewith . . . to the cumulative penalty of penal servitude for life as the main penalty, to ten years' loss of office and ten years' suspension of political rights; further, the confiscation of all his property as supplementary punishment."

The charges against the Cardinal were circulated prior to the trial itself in an official *Yellow Book*, and the government subsequently issued a *Black Book* giving its version of the proceedings. The more carefully one reads these volumes, the greater one's astonishment is likely to be. We may discount in advance all the allegations which are known to have no foundation in fact. What is to be said of those which are probably true? A relatively minor charge is that certain sums of money obtained from abroad for Church purposes were not trans-

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793 ferred at the official rate. For these derelictions the Cardinal
696 accepted full responsibility and offered to make restitution,
687 though he personally could have had nothing to do with them. At best they would have merited a small fine levied against the Archiepiscopal treasury. The second charge, and no doubt the most important, was that prior to the signing of the treaty of peace the Cardinal had endeavored to win the support of the Western Powers. This he was clearly entitled to do, in the legal sense; and morally he was under the obligation to make every effort to maintain civil and religious rights as he understood them. It was true that he had clung desperately to his belief that the United States would not permit the Russians to acquire unilateral rule over Hungary—a hope he shared with millions of other Hungarian citizens, and indeed with foreigners of every creed and persuasion who happened to be in Hungary at that time. In declaring that such beliefs constituted conspiracy against the State, the Prosecutor argued and the Court upheld the view that desiring anything short of complete Russian control was incompatible with the Constitutional provision that full liberty of opinion, speech, and assembly was assured.

649 One special charge was that the Cardinal had indirectly approached American authorities handling restitution claims in order to urge that the Crown of St. Stephen be sent to the Vatican to be held in trust there. Here he was daring but still prudent. Undoubtedly he had very good reason to fear that the Crown, most illustrious symbol of Hungary's past, would be shipped to Russia as soon as it was returned to Budapest. His maneuver was certainly not complimentary to the Communists; but they were bound by the Occupation Statute and later by the treaty of peace, which went into effect on September 15, 1947. The Cardinal's correspondence concerning the Crown antedates the treaty. Yet even this obliges the Hungarian government to respect Article 2, which reads:

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1. Hungary shall take all measures necessary to secure to all persons under Hungarian jurisdiction, without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion, the enjoyment of human rights and of the fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, of press and publication, of religious worship, of political opinion, and of public meeting.

2. Hungary further undertakes that the laws in force in Hungary shall not, either in their content or in their application, discriminate or entail any discrimination between persons of Hungarian nationality on the ground of their race, sex, language, or religion, whether in reference to their persons, property, business, professional or financial interests, status, political or civil rights, or any other matter.

Never has a peace treaty contained fairer pledges. Unfortunately there exists no sanction against their violation save a rebuke before the forum of the United Nations. Such a rebuke was of course administered.

The charge which laid the Cardinal most seriously open to criticism was that as a Monarchist he had conspired to bring about a Restoration, had conferred with the Pretender to the Throne, and had relied upon American intervention to achieve his aims. The testimony on these matters presented at the trial and outlined in the *Black Book* is confused; nor did the Cardinal receive an opportunity to comment on the accusations in any adequate or sustained way. He admitted that he was a Legitimist, that he had hoped the Regency would be succeeded by a Monarchy, and that at the request of Otto of Habsburg he had conferred with him while visiting the United States during 1947. These things did not constitute conspiracy against the State, and would indeed be permissible within the framework of a relatively democratic society. Whether reestablishing the Monarchy was in any sense practicable, whether it was the form of government best suited to Hungary, and whether the population of the country would

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793 have voted in favor of a Restoration are, to be sure, matters
696 one could debate at length. But that discussion has no bearing
• 687 on the issue that the Cardinal had conspired to plunge the nation into civil war and thus impose a solution by force.

A number of able jurists of varied confessional and political points of view have carefully reviewed the trial procedures. There is none of repute in the free world who has not held that the trial was a farcical travesty of justice.*

793 And so the Cardinal, indefatigable leader of his Church
687 and of his people, entered through a narrow gate of infamy and pain the desert of penitential tribute to the power of iniquity. The ancient secret, that of the *mysterium iniquitatis*, the mystery of evil, was his to meditate upon even as hermits and martyrs, sages and great sufferers, the wise and the humble since the dawn of time had pondered it in times past. No doubt all he had to uproot from his heart were some vestiges of pride in his natural abilities and in his holy office—the pride he had sloughed off, surely, in the bitter days when he may well have asked the question which was on the lips of his Master, why God had forsaken him, and why he had been so grievously scourged for the sins of his time. They had humiliated him far beyond any boundaries which are set for humility to traverse. They had proved that theirs were the battalions and the torturers, the makers of decrees and the profiteers of power. The Archbishop of Esztergom, Prince of the Church and member of the Regent's Council, had become

[693] * The trial of the Cardinal was directed by László Rajk, Minister of the Interior, who during September, 1949, was accused not only of having attempted to overthrow the Hungarian government and assassinate its principal officials but of espionage in behalf of the governments of the United States, Great Britain, and Yugoslavia. In short, Rajk was on trial for emulating Marshal Tito. Seven others were indicted as his accomplices. All were placed in confinement for some time previous to the convening of the Court. Testimony was introduced purporting to prove association with divers representatives of foreign powers. Nearly all of these have vehemently denied the allegations. Three death sentences were handed down and carried out. One victim was Rajk himself.

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a convict devoid of honor or name, uncertain even whether 733
he was looked upon throughout the world as a man who had 617
betrayed his trust. No one could tell him that in his worst hour simple people were praying that the Lord God might have mercy on him—praying throughout Hungary, which he may have loved too well even as some other men love their wives unduly. The world into which he went from his trial was a world without prayer or peace. God had departed from it. One cannot avoid saying that. It was become a world in which endless shifts of prisoners move out of the gray dawn into the even grayer dusk, and it was necessary that it have in its midst a man stripped naked. It needed Job in the red hat of a Cardinal.*

After the condemnation of its most resourceful and courageous Christian leader, Hungary could no longer muster anyone to lead the resistance. During August, 1950, the Catholic Bishops signed an agreement with the government similar in every significant respect to that which the Bishops of Czechoslovakia had signed. Despite it Cardinal Mindszenty's successor was arrested and haled before a court. A "Peace Movement" was formed among the clergy; and though at first only a few elected to join it, these gave it enthusiastic support. On October 23, 1951, for example, the Budapest Radio announced that a meeting of the "reconstituted Board" of the movement had been held, at which Bishop Beresztocsky, the

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*The fate of the Cardinal in imprisonment has been described by eyewitnesses who may be assumed to be reliable. Congenital frailty, and not mistreatment in prison, is responsible for his poor health. He has been permitted to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, although in complete isolation. Two visits from his mother have been permitted, and he has seen the Archbishop of Eger and the Bishop entrusted with the care of Catholics according to the Greek rite. Hungarian sources indicate that he has not been deported but is at Hüvösvölgy Prison in Budapest. There is no information as to views which the Cardinal may have expressed to his visitors, but all sources agree that he has been treated without undue harshness, and that the principal rigors of prison life are self-imposed.